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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRATISLAVA 000117

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [KO](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: KUBIS LOOKING FOR DOMESTIC AGREEMENT ON KOSOVO IN
THE FINE PRINT

REF: BRATISLAVA 115 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Summary: FM Kubis told the Ambassador February 24 that language in a Slovak parliamentary resolution referring to regional peace and security could give the GOS a way to support an eventual UNSCR on Kosovo, even without the agreement of Serbia. Kubis and other MFA diplomats continue to strategize on how to persuade Slovak politicians to go along with international community consensus. Kubis recommended that in addition to the Ambassador's meetings with PM Fico and President Gasparovic the week of March 5, NSC leadership should call Gasparovic slightly before Ahtisaari submits his proposal at the UN, and that a similar call from the Secretary to Fico in the same timeframe could be important. The Ambassador stressed the importance of EU unity to KDH Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky, who committed to work within parliament's foreign affairs committee toward a parliamentary resolution on Kosovo that left the government some flexibility. Contact Group ambassadors in Bratislava agreed February 26 to continue discussing the issue with their own political party contacts and to jointly approach Fico at a March 16 lunch. The U.K. embassy has proposed a Blair-Dzurinda phone call, and we suggested a Merkel-Fico pull aside at the European Council meeting, as well as raising Kosovo with Gasparovic during his official visit to Italy February 27-28. End summary.

12. (C) Foreign Minister Jan Kubis told the Ambassador February 24 he is solidly behind the Ahtisaari plan. He admitted he hates the issue and does not have a great deal of personal sympathy for Kosovar Albanians but understands that the Serbs must be forced to accept the plan: for peace and stability of the region, there must be European unity on Kosovo. Kubis said that if his government forces him to take a position counter to that of the international community, he will resign. He believes this is Europe's big test. His primary purpose for the meeting was to strategize on how to keep his own government and parliament on board.

13. (C) Kubis was toying with whether to get Parliament to consider the Kosovo issue before or after the Ahtisaari plan is tabled at the UN. Since the tabling could be before parliament resumes sessions on March 20, Kubis would have to ask Speaker Pavol Paska (from PM Fico's Smer party) to bring parliament back early. This move would only highlight the issue, but it might give some cover if Ahtisaari makes some pro-Serbian changes before tabling. He fears, however, that a debate on a more anodyne option before tabling could be followed by a second assault by opposition leader Mikulas Dzurinda on the tabled UN motion after it is introduced. Kubis said that Slovakia would only abstain at the UN if the outcome would not be negatively affected by their vote, and that if Slovakia was needed he would ensure they would be

there--if he managed his own government. His meeting with Churkin suggested that the Russians were not necessarily dug in on a veto, he felt "good vibes."

Peace and Security Can Be the Hook

14. (C) Kubis encouraged as much engagement as possible with members of parliament and the government from all angles, especially with Prime Minister Robert Fico and President Ivan Gasporovic, but only at high levels for the leaders. Kubis thinks (and Paska confirmed) that it is impossible to stop the parliamentary debate. What Kubis is hoping for is a resolution with softened language, that is not binding, and contains a reference to regional peace and security, the hook he believes he needs to support EU and Ahtisaari positions. In a strange way, the parliamentary resolution could allow both Fico and Kubis to back away from their "no deal without Serb agreement" language. Kubis is traveling with the PM February 26 in Ukraine. He said he would get together with Fico, Paska, and Gasparovic next week to discuss strategy. HZDS leader and coalition partner Vladimir Meciar has told Kubis he is on board with Kubis.

15. (C) In order to give Kubis political cover domestically, he seeks four things that he claims the Ahtisaari plan still does not still have:

- i) the Kosovars must offer to delay any UN membership request until after progress with the elements of the plan are well advanced;
- ii) the new UN resolution should follow the framework of the existing one;
- iii) the resolution should contain more explicit language on "no partition of Kosovo;"
- iv) the resolution should contain explicit language in a "no

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merger with Kosovo" provision. Strategically, given Fico's political aversion to military casualties, Kubis is making the point that Slovakia's 135 Kosovo peacekeepers would likely be sucked into the conflict if violence erupts if the UN plan falls apart.

16. (C) On Dzurinda, Kubis said Dzurinda had specifically told him that his discussions with Merkel were Dzurinda's initiative, counter to what Dzurinda told the Ambassador and at odds with the common EPP strategy suggested by another Dzurinda advisor (reftel). Nonetheless, Kubis did not discount the idea that there is a split between Merkel and the German Foreign Ministry on Kosovo. Kubis claimed Merkel is playing coy with Fico and no bilateral meeting has been scheduled in Germany. Kubis asked if we could be helpful in suggesting a 20 minute pull-aside between Merkel and Fico at the Council of Ministers to talk about Kosovo. In addition, any German approach to Dzurinda would be important given how Dzurinda, to the irritation of German diplomats in Bratislava, is advertising around town his special relationship with Merkel.

Top-Level Engagement

17. (C) Kubis recommended that the Ambassador meet the week of March 5 with both Fico and Gasparovic next week. He said an NSC (Hadley/Crouch) call to Gasporovic should occur slightly before Ahtisaari places the proposal before the UN, but no later. A similar call from the Secretary to Fico at the same time could be important. He promised constant communication in the run-up to the parliamentary discussion and appreciated our efforts with the opposition parties. However, he is not entirely confident he can deliver Fico in the end if Fico is attacked by Dzurinda.

KDH: Caught Off-Guard by Dzurinda's About-Face

18. (C) In our continuing effort to persuade Slovak politicians not to derail the Kosovo status process, the Ambassador stressed the importance of EU unity to Christian

Democratic Movement (KDH) Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky February 126. Hrusovsky said that Dzurinda's position when he was PM was completely different; Dzurinda never promoted any idea that was against the position of the U.S. and the international community. KDH had been much more cautious on Kosovo. When Dzurinda spoke out against a Kosovo resolution that didn't have Serbian agreement, KDH felt the need to make similar statements. Hrusovsky listened carefully to the Ambassador's arguments, and said that he would work within Parliament's foreign affairs committee the week of March 12 to build consensus on a Kosovo-related resolution that would give the government flexibility.

Contact Group Ambassadors Will Approach Fico March 16

19. (C) The ambassadors from Italy, Germany, UK, France, and U.S. met informally February 26 to discuss how to influence Slovakia's political decision on Kosovo. They reached a consensus that joint approaches to the highest levels of government would not be helpful. The MFA doesn't need to be demarched, and an overly-aggressive approach to Fico could be counter-productive. The ambassadors agreed to continue talking to their individual contacts in government and political parties, and that the EU contact group ambassadors would pull Fico aside at a March 16 EU Presidency lunch hosted by the German Embassy to discuss Kosovo. The U.K. Charge also suggested PM Blair might reach out to Dzurinda. We encouraged the Italians to raise the issue with Gasparovic during his February 27-28 official visit to Italy, and urged the Germans to have a Merkel-Fico pull-aside during the European Council meeting, as requested by Kubis. The German Ambassador thought a Merkel-Dzurinda phone call would be difficult to arrange since Slovak isolation was Dzurinda's primary political goal. The Ambassador suggested that Dzurinda's potential isolation from his center-right contacts in and out of government is an equally useful lever.

VALLEE